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To Mark Purcell/R6/USEPA/US@EPA
cc
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Subject FW: News Article on Huley cleanup

From: Eustice, Chris, NMENV
Sent: Friday, March 17, 2006 3:13 PM
To: Bill Olson (bill.olson@state.nm.us); Cindy Padilla (cindy.padilla@state.nm.us); Kevin Myers; Mara Seely (mseeley@gradientcorp.com); Mary Ann ; Phil Harrigan (phil.harrigan@state.nm.us); Mike Reed (mike.reed@state.nm.us)
Subject: News Article on Huley cleanup

In case you missed it, below is an article from the Silver City Sun-News (Thrs 3/16) about the Hurley cleanup. I heard that a report was done on Channel 7 (KOAT) yesterday, but I did not see it.

Chris Eustice

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Phelps Dodge begins Hurley cleanup
Thomas J. Baird
Silver City Sun-News

Sun-News bureau chief

The Chino Mines Co. has begun work to clean up copper contaminated top soil in residential yards in **Hurley**.

The project has been under way for more than 10 years, with testing, planning, negotiations and public meetings preceding the recent final approval of the plan by the New Mexico Environment Department.

The soil contamination is a result of prior copper concentrator and smelter operations.

The plan includes cleaning up soil in residential yards that are contaminated with copper in excess of 5,000 parts per million. All cleanup activities will be paid for by the Chino Mines Co., a wholly owned subsidiary of Phelps Dodge Mining.

John Purcell, construction manager for the project for the contract firm of Golder &



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Associates, Inc., was in **Hurley** Wednesday overseeing operations on behalf of Chino Mines Co.

"We're the engineer-consulting firm who did the design and all the background work as far as doing the sampling and methodology for this project," he said. "After 10 years of study, now we're really starting with the construction phase, which we believe will be about 250 homes in the **Hurley** area."

Remediation will include partial or entire yards, depending on what the ongoing sampling of the community's soil uncovers, he added.

Entact, a Chicago-based residential remediation company, is the general contractor for the project.

"They're nationally known for doing this sort of remediation," said Purcell.

According to the NMED, health studies have shown that ingestion of elevated levels of copper can cause stomach or intestinal distress.

The cleanup level of 5,000 parts per million was established in July of 2005 under an administrative order between NMED and Chino Mines Co. The NMED said the prescribed safety level is consistent with recommendations by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

"This cleanup will help meet the state's goal of ensuring that the long-term health of the people of **Hurley** is protected from former smelter operations," said NMED Secretary Ron Curry. "When this cleanup is complete, the people of **Hurley** will be able to enjoy their property and yards with the confidence that copper contamination is no longer a problem."

Prior to beginning cleanup activities, participation by residents was requested. Those who volunteer will have their surface soils tested to determine the copper concentration.

"When the work is all done, we'll do a final walk-through and inspection as to the appropriateness of our work, so there's a final sign-off on saying the work we did was satisfactory," Purcell said. "So really, it's a voluntary program between Chino Mines and the residents and with the NMED."

Two residents of Pattie Avenue, who have had their properties remediated over the past few days, said Wednesday they were generally pleased with the work. Janet Wofford, a 57-year-old who has lived in her home for 35 years and raised her children there, said work started last week.

"Most of the yard wasn't up to the (contaminated threshold)," she said. "Just this in the front was the only (affected area). So, that's all that they did."

Wofford said she opted to go with xeriscape gravel rather than resodding her property. Over the years, she said she was aware of concerns over contamination, but she never really worried.

"We raised our kids here and they haven't had any problems," she said. "They weren't real dirt eaters. But they actually came around when my oldest daughter was about three and they (checked) the dust for lead, to see if there was any in the air from the smokestacks, and there wasn't. And they did a blood test and hair samples and stuff, but she was OK."

Paul Rosenberg, who is in his mid 60s and moved to **Hurley** from Albuquerque two years ago, said he's satisfied with the work the contractors have done, but he never would have purchased the house if he'd known about the copper contamination. He blames the Realtor for not ensuring that disclosure of the contamination was made.

"It's just fine, it's positive," he said of the recent work. "They did what they said they were going to do. They let me know the one spot exceeded the 5,000 parts per million, in fact they had a nice printout, because they laid out grids when they did the testing."

Rosenberg had some minor complaints over the remediation process, such as a lack of communication in some instances, but he said he was pleased overall.

Further information about the project is available by contacting Adam Rankin, NMED communications director, at 505-827-0314. Locally, questions can be directed to the project's community coordinator, Beatrice Leger, at 313-4857.

Thomas J. Baird can be reached at tbaird@scsun-news.com

Photo Sun-News photo by Thomas J. Baird

Workers excavate the topsoil from a yard at a residence on Elguea Avenue in **Hurley** Wednesday as part of a remediation agreement between Phelps Dodge's Chino Mines Co., the New Mexico Environment Department and the citizens of the town. The copper contaminated soil is being replaced with either new sod or xeriscaping gravel.

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